



**District Parent Advisory Council
School District #73 (Kamloops/Thompson)**

POSITION STATEMENT

Foundation Skills Assessments / Standardized Testing

Ratified: February 17, 2009

Statement of Position:

1. SD 73 DPAC supports the use of standardized testing.
2. SD 73 DPAC supports annual Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) testing in Grades 4 and 7.
3. SD73 DPAC supports the continued use of the census format for FSAs.
4. SD 73 DPAC does not support the Fraser Institute use of the Foundation Skills Assessment data to rank schools.

Rationale:

1. Standardized testing is a means to confirm that our children are receiving a quality education and ensures that the education system has accountability. Further, standardized test results are valuable to School Planning Councils in setting and evaluating school goals for reading, writing, and numeracy.
2. Foundation Skills Assessments are an important tool for comparing student achievement against Ministry of Education standards. FSAs are important in measuring the effectiveness of the public education system, and make the system more accountable.

Annual Foundation Skills Assessments in Grades 4 and 7 combine with other assessment tools to inform school, district, and provincial level planning.
3. The census format of FSAs provides valuable supplemental information to parents, teachers, and principals regarding individual student progress.
4. The Fraser Institute system of ranking schools based on FSA data is inaccurate and unhelpful. Schools cannot be accurately ranked based upon such a narrow range of criteria. We encourage parents to spend time in schools to observe the learning environment firsthand and talk to teachers, administrators and other parents to get a more accurate impression of the quality of our schools.

Methodology:

This position was developed after gathering input from a variety of sources.

- SD73 DPAC hosted a parent information night on January 13, 2009 with presentations from both the SD 73 Administration and the Kamloops Thompson Teachers' Association.
- Subsequently, a web-based survey was run, generating 126 responses representing 58% of District elementary schools and 70% of high schools.
- DPAC reps were invited to discuss the issue at their PAC tables and brought forward the resulting feedback.
- Finally, the position was ratified at the DPAC Regular Meeting held February 17, 2009.